

# **BICYCLE EVENTS**

## ***A Community Guide***



***NCDOT, Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation***

# Community Events



The following section describes various bicycle events which may be promoted in communities both during bicycle month and throughout the year. These events stress the seriousness of bicycling, provide opportunities for essential bicycle safety training and allow individuals to experience the pleasure which safe bicycling offers.



## CONDUCTING A BICYCLE REPAIR CLINIC

The average person's bicycle, unless it is brand new, is usually in need of adjustment, overhaul or repair. Children often leave their bikes in the rain, throw them down in the driveway, ride them over rough terrain, down curbs, and over potholes. When the brakes stop working or fall off, they use their feet to stop; if the gears do not work, they ride it as a single-speed; if the handlebars are loose, they find a way to compensate for the lack of steering control; if the spokes are broken, so what? The old adult bike is often found under fifteen years of dust and junk in the back corner of the basement. Its tires are rotten, spokes are missing and the chain is broken. In general, the average citizen, whether he be young or old, pays little or no attention to the maintenance of bicycles. This is unfortunate as many bicycle accidents are the result of mechanical failure and thus

could be prevented through proper care of the vehicle. For this reason a bicycle clinic is an important part of a total bicycle safety program and should be an element of any series of bicycle promotional events.



In order for the clinic to be really successful, each person must understand what is being done to his or her bike, why it is being done, and should be allowed to observe how it's being done. To accomplish this, at least four experienced mechanics will be needed to handle 50 bicycles per day. Mechanical assistance can be solicited from local bicycle shops or from members of local bicycle clubs. A bike shop owner might be more willing to participate if replacement parts to be used for the clinic are purchased from his or her bike shop.

To speed the process of handling the participants and their bikes, a bicycle inspection to determine problems should precede the maintenance and repair clinic. A tag listing points to be checked should be attached to each bicycle. Then the bicyclist can simply wheel the bicycle to a repair station and the mechanic can begin work immediately.



The clinic area should be set up in an organized manner. Observers should be kept away from the repair area unless it is their bicycle which is being worked on. This can be accomplished by giving each person a number as he/she arrives, then having them wait in another area until his number is called. This waiting time is ideal for showing continuous films, slide shows and safety presentations since you have their attention.

Do not expect to be able to repair all bicycles. Some are beyond repair. It does no good to fix the gears, patch the tires, and replace broken spokes on a bicycle that has no brakes and is a hazard to ride. The decision on how much repair will be done should be made in advance. Following is a list of the most common problems which will be encountered:

- flat tire
- broken or rusted cables
- worn brake pads
- missing handlebar grips/bar end plugs
- broken spokes
- derailleur out of adjustment
- loose handlebar
- loose seat
- missing pedals
- rusty chain
- broken chain
- brakes not adjusted
- wobbly wheels
- hub cones out of adjustment
- loose nuts and screws
- missing coaster brake clips
- unwrapped handlebars (ten-speed)
- loose brake clamps

A variety of replacement parts will be needed to perform these repairs. Replacement parts could run approximately \$5.00 per bike. Financial assistance might be solicited from local civic organizations to buy parts and hire mechanics, if necessary.

If the Bicycle Inspection, Maintenance and Repair Clinic is held as a separate event, local recreation centers, schools, YMCA's, YWCA's or other community facilities may be willing to sponsor the activity. Remember to locate the clinic at a place that is easily accessible by bike from all parts of town.

## BICYCLE FESTIVAL/BIKE DAY

Bicycle festivals, fairs, and field days are excellent ways to promote bicycling and involve a cross-section of the community in a variety of events. Such festivals are good media events and very popular with families. The days can include games, races, safety inspections, displays, skills testing, tours, etc. Such events can be either one-day, weekend, or week-long in duration. A longer time span allows for more events to be held. With the week-long festivals, a community can set aside certain days for special events (i.e., bike-to-work day, school bicycle day, family bicycle tour day, bicycle registration day). Coupled with extensive media coverage and feature bicycle articles and programs, the bicycle festival calls public attention to the benefits of bicycling for everyone in the community.

## BIKE-IN

This event is staged primarily to demonstrate support for bicycling, a local bike program, or other bicycle needs. It should be widely advertised to inform all who may be interested. Regarding the selection of the route for the ride, either the roads should be closed (usually during a weekend) for the ride, or a course of lightly traveled roads should be selected. Police and emergency medical services should be notified. There should be a beginning and end point selected with a ride-course long enough to be enjoyable but not too long to discourage less capable riders. To satisfy those bicyclists interested in a longer ride, the local bicycle club or avid cyclists could lead longer rides through the nearby area. Press coverage and a program with local officials should end the bike-in. Other activities such as picnics, games, and other bicycle programs may accompany this event.

## MOONLIGHT RIDE

This event is very similar to the "bike-in" except that it is undertaken after dark once the downtown area is more deserted, usually during the full moon. The same guidelines should be used as for the "bike-in" except more precautions for safety should be made. Police should provide traffic control at major intersections. Emergency medical services should be on close standby. One advantage to this event is the popularity with the public. They enjoy the fun of night riding which few ever do, and they get to see the city as they never have before.



## BIKE TOUR

Parks and recreation departments, physical fitness groups, bike clubs, etc. may wish to plan this event. The bicycle tour could be through scenic or historical areas but should consider the safety of the cyclists in the planning of the route. The event can be a citywide tour, led by knowledgeable cyclists, and held several times a month or a longer tour within and around the city which may even include an overnight camping experience.

A ride along a well constructed recreational bike path would be ideal, but this type of facility is not available in all areas. The time of day or day of week often has a bearing on the amount of traffic which will be encountered. This should be taken into consideration in planning any trip. For instance, roads within a recreation area would be more lightly traveled during the week than on weekends; roads in a park area are sometimes closed to motorized traffic on weekends; a trip to a historic site near a downtown area might be more accessible on a Sunday when traffic is lighter. Maps showing the average daily traffic volumes for rural roads are usually available from the State Department of Transportation and useful in planning rides in the country. The selected route should be tested before the day of the group ride to pinpoint potential problems, as well as to locate rest stops and points of interest.

As even the slowest rider can easily cover five to eight miles in an hour, the bike tour will end too quickly unless other recreational activities are included. These activities will vary according to the location of the trip. Picnics are always fun as are swimming, volleyball and softball. Historic sites often offer informative tours, while nature walks are a feature of many recreation areas. If the trip is along a bike path or road closed to motor vehicle traffic, a

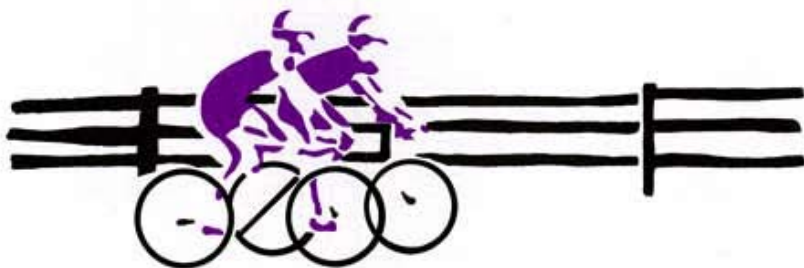
scavenger hunt (limited to small, easy to carry items) could be conducted. Bicycle field events such as slow races, relays, etc. could be conducted at a destination which offers a large paved surface.

Once the outing has been planned, all bicycles should be checked to be sure they are in good condition. Check tire pressure and brake adjustment; tighten nuts and bolts, seat posts and handlebars. There are a few items which each rider should carry on any trip which takes him/her more than a few miles from home. A small tool kit with tire irons, a tire patching kit, and a pump are necessities. Several riders should have prior experience in using these items. Water or juice and some kind of snack are nice to have. A light jacket for early morning or late afternoon riding is also useful. Someone in the group should carry a first-aid kit as accidents can happen. A front carrier, seat pack, back pack or bicycle rack should be used to carry these items as it is very dangerous to carry objects in the hands while riding.

Finally, be sure that the participants understand the fundamental rules of the road. The bicycle is a vehicle and should be ridden on the right-hand side of the road, in the same direction as other traffic. Riders can ride two abreast, but they should not block traffic. A bicyclist should stop at stop signs and stop lights, signal all turns, and should never ride the wrong way down a one-way street. On the road, ride in small groups of five or six leaving enough room between groups so that a motorist can pass safely.

## BIKE-A-THON

The bike-a-thon is an event conducted to raise money, usually for a charity, but more recently for the dual purposes of a charity and specific bicycle programs or facilities. In some instances, all bike-a-thon money goes toward bicycle programs. The organizers should either be schools, bicycle clubs, or civic organizations or a combination thereof. The organizers would sponsor or help find sponsors for the bike-a-thon participants. The participants can also obtain individual sponsors. A sponsor would guarantee certain amounts of money for each mile ridden. A lightly traveled route should be selected for the event - either on private property, lesser traveled town or country roads, or on closed city streets. The locality should assist in the selection of the route and the scheduling of the closings. Police and emergency medical services should be notified of the activity.





## BICYCLE RACE

A bicycle race within the town/city boundaries could be one (or several) of a variety of competitive events. There are several types of races.

The **CRITERIUM** is conducted along a circuitous route of  $\frac{1}{2}$ -2 miles in length which is closed to all other traffic. Downtown areas, parks and subdivision streets are the most adaptable to criterium races. The racers ride the circuit a number of times, to equal the appropriate distance (5, 10, 15, etc. miles). This type of race provides much action and is exciting for spectators. Different age groups can compete at different times during the day's event. Approval should be sought to hold the race on any state or city roads.

The **ROAD RACE** is held on an open course (mixing with other traffic) along lightly traveled roads. Distances range for 20-120 miles per race. This type of race is the most exciting, in terms of competition, but spectator enjoyment is limited as most of these races are run from point to point. Approval from the state or county (whichever has jurisdiction over the roads) is advisable to conduct the race on these roads.

The **TIME TRIAL** is a race against the clock. Riders start at intervals on the riding course and try to complete the course in as short a time as possible. Course distance is generally 5-10 miles. Traffic control is suggested, if possible.

Ideally, the locality would solicit the support and assistance of the local bicycle club or at least a local bicycle racer to help organize any of these events. Experience with previous race events would be of benefit. However, the local recreation department could stage a bicycle race with the assistance of guidelines from the U.S. Cycling Federation (see the "Resources" section).

## BICYCLE RAFFLE

A bicycle raffle could be held (where laws permit) to raise monies for non-profit agencies or special projects.

Instead of obtaining a bicycle, ask for a certificate of purchase from a dealer to award to the winner. It is important that the bike fit the recipient; therefore, by receiving a certificate, the winner will be able to select his own bicycle. Bikes need not be the most expensive nor the cheapest. More than one bike could be raffled.

Decide on a fair price for the raffle ticket which will assure profit.

Print the tickets with places to record the name, the address, and the phone number of the ticket holder to be placed for drawing. A portion of the ticket can be given to the purchaser as a receipt.

Tickets may be sold at shopping centers, or malls at a bicycle booth manned by a volunteer. A bicycle may be used as a model and the booth should advertise the sponsoring organization and the purpose of the raffle. The date of the drawing should be mentioned. If the drawing will be held at another bicycle program activity, this should also be publicized.

Bicycle safety should be promoted while selling the raffle tickets through the display and possibly the distribution of handout materials.

Money derived as profit from the sale may be used to purchase bicycle safety items for the local bicycle program, schools and libraries (films, books on bicycling, bicycle periodicals and educational bicycle safety materials for mass distribution). Also, monies could be given to the locality to help fund certain bicycle facility improvements.

## FAMILY SLOW BICYCLE RACE

A slow bicycle race is similar to a relay team track event. Team members compete against other teams in heats along a predetermined course. When one team member finishes the course, another team member begins. In a slow race, the last team to finish is the winner.

Family slow bicycle races could be conducted using the following guidelines:

- **Course Layout** - The course for the slow race is a series of adjacent lanes which are 6-8 feet wide and 100 feet in length. The number of lanes available determines the number of family teams which can race against each other in one heat.
- **Family Teams** - A team consists of four (4) members of a family. A family team may consist of:

4 children  
1 adult --- 3 children  
2 adults --- 2 children  
3 adults --- 1 child  
4 adults



In the event that families have only two or three members participating, those families may select a member(s) to participate twice in the event. Members of each team must cover the course a total of four times.

- **The Slow Race** - A registration table should be set up where each family team will register and receive a team number. The number of teams will determine the number of heats to be conducted. (Local areas may decide to hold family slow bicycles races in several parts of town which would result in semi-final winners and a citywide race with a grand winner).

Family teams are assigned to lanes. Each member has a bicycle on which he participates. (Families must use at least two bicycles but may use more if desired). One family team member participates at a time. The objective for each participant is to bicycle the 100 feet as slowly as possible. Once a team member completes the course (or is disqualified), the next team member starts. The family determines the order in which they compete. The last remaining team on the course is the winner of that heat.

- **Disqualification** - While competing, the bicycle must be in continuous forward motion. NO team member may:

Turn his bicycle around and ride toward the start line.

Ride outside the lane.

Stop his bike.

Touch the ground with his feet.

If a team member is disqualified by a judge, the next team member is started. Only the rider, and possibly the judge, may be in a lane at any one time.

- **Judging** - There should be race officials at the beginning and end of each lane. Each judge watches for disqualifications as well as starts the next team member at the proper time. They also assist in determining the winners.

The head race official starts the heats, makes the final decision on winners, and records semifinal and final results.

- **Winners/Prizes** - The winners should be recognized in some local ceremony and possibly presented with certificates and/or prizes.

## INDIVIDUAL BICYCLING FITNESS CAMPAIGN

Communities can conduct a one-month campaign for individual bicycling fitness. This event recognizes and promotes bicycling for fun as well as for other purposes. Anyone residing in the community may participate by registering and keeping a log of his/her miles bicycled for the month of May.

Local agencies can coordinate the fitness campaign. Registration should be set up at a centrally located public building at least one week prior to the May starting date. The registration should be kept open for one week into the month of May. Logging sheets can be printed by a sponsoring business and distributed to each participant at registration. Completed mileage logs should be returned within five days following the end of the month.

The town or city should award certificates for all who qualify during the fitness campaign. The certificates could include the Mayor's signature and information on the accomplishments of the individual bicyclists.

Recognition can be made in three categories;

- 1) Junior Pedaler - one who bicycles at least 30 miles.
- 2) Century Cyclist - one who bicycles at least 100 miles.
- 3) Grand Bicyclist - one who bicycles 500 miles or more.

## SPEAKER'S BUREAU

A public speaker can generate support for a program and convey safety information. Such a person can lend something to the program that TV, radio and newspaper publicity cannot provide—personal contact.

If volunteers are to be solicited, they should be knowledgeable about bicycles and traffic safety and good public speakers. Possible speakers could be solicited from the following: Bicycle Committees (state or local); police departments; various civic groups; city officials; and bicycle dealers and bicycle club members.

A list of the speakers along with their specific topics should be made available to groups who might wish to have a program on bicycle safety. Civic groups, youth groups (Scouts, 4-H, etc.), schools, PTA's and churches might be interested in this program.

These groups should be encouraged to select speakers who are most knowledgeable to speak on the proper selection of a bicycle and maintenance.

The speaker should consider his/her audience (whether it consists of youngsters, adults, parents) and the community needs in choosing the level and content of his/her speech.

Presentations can be livened up by using slides, transparencies, films, brochures and safety literature, flip charts, and other visual aids.

Community groups should be encouraged to have more than one speaker make a presentation if at all possible. Therefore, in announcing the formation of the speakers bureau with the available speakers and their specific topics listed, you should promote the importance and the need for presentations on several topics. What you want to avoid is a situation where all the civic groups select only the local police officer to make his presentation about enforcement of city ordinances pertaining to bicycles.

## BIKE-TO-WORK DAY

Bike-To-Work (BTW) Day can be organized and held in conjunction with a state or national BTW Day, as part of a Bike Week celebration or as it's own, special event. The objective of BTW is to focus attention on bicycling commuting.

People are encouraged to join other cyclists on their way to work, and to ride as a group along one of several different routes to a downtown location. There, all the groups, or caravans, will meet for brief speeches featuring local elected officials and appropriate celebrities.

Each route should be assigned to one or more leaders who can be contacted ahead of time by people interested in participating.

Advance publicity is very important to the success of a BTW Day. It is a good idea to print and distribute flyers describing the event, showing the routes and giving the names and phone numbers of the leaders. Also, it is helpful to offer several noon-time "clinics", to demonstrate what is involved in biking to work and to give interested people a chance to ask questions.

## BIKE MONTH PROCLAMATION

It may be possible to have the mayor (or council) issue a proclamation declaring May - American Bike Month. A sample of such a proclamation is reproduced below. The wording of the "whereases" can be changed to highlight specific features or needs of your community.

### SAMPLE PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, for more than a century, the bicycle has been an important part of the lives of most Americans, usually providing their first form of independent transportation; and

WHEREAS, today more than one hundred million Americans engage in bicycling for fitness, recreation, sport and transportation; and

WHEREAS, for more than twenty-five years, the bicycle industry, bicycling organizations and cyclists of the United States have celebrated the month of May as American Bike Month, observing the joys and utility of this unique, human-powered vehicle; and

WHEREAS, bicycling organizations, governments and businesses are working together to promote and enhance bicycle use; and

WHEREAS, serious participation in bicycling is on the upswing, with more races, bike-a-thons, and events of all kinds being organized; and

WHEREAS, U.S. cyclists—both professional and amateur, men and women—have become a major force in the highest levels of international competition, and now include world champions; and

WHEREAS, the needs of cyclists for safe and clean roads, bridge access and vehicle code improvement are receiving increased attention;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, \_\_\_\_\_, Mayor of the City of \_\_\_\_\_, do hereby proclaim the Month of May 198, as:

"AMERICAN BIKE MONTH"

and, further, I encourage all of our citizens to get back on their bikes: Bicycling—The Way To Go!

DONE AT THE EXECUTIVE  
OFFICE

THIS \_\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_, 198  
WITNESS MY HAND AND THE  
GREAT SEAL OF THE CITY OF

\_\_\_\_\_  
MAYOR OF \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Week or Day may be substituted in place of Month.



If your mayor is willing to issue such a proclamation, you should consider turning the signing ceremony into a media event. Every elected official likes to get press coverage so invite the newspapers, radio and TV to the event.

Finally, if the mayor is willing to issue a proclamation you may be able to get him/her to take some specific action at the same time, like announcing the appointment of a Bicycle Committee.

## HELMET USE CAMPAIGN

A special campaign to increase use of helmets by cyclists of all ages could be promoted throughout the community. The various media could be involved to publicize the program, and help to educate the public on the importance of helmet use.

Civic clubs, bike clubs, Scout groups, and others could participate by purchasing or providing funds for helmets to be used as prizes for various bicycle-related contests. Bicycle shops could be encouraged to offer special discounts on helmets if they were purchased in lots of ten or more. School groups (PTA's, etc.) could be enlisted to organize helmet purchases in their schools.

*Helmet use should be shown and encouraged in conjunction with all other bicycle events. Helmets save lives!*

## BICYCLE CLUB ORGANIZATION

A bicycle club can be started and meet regularly to discuss various bicycle topics, learn from each other's experiences and plan bicycle trips together. Such organizations can be sponsored by civic clubs or local government agencies or can be initiated by interested local citizens.

To get started, study your area, contact local bicycle shops and contact other bicycle clubs in your part of the state. Shops and existing clubs can assist in club organization. Along with other bicyclists in your community, plan a bike meeting. This could be a social event in someone's home or in a public building.

Here are a few suggestions for getting started:

- Announce meeting by card, letter or phone call. Make up your mailing list of known bicycle enthusiasts, civic organization, lists for bicycle shops, etc.
- Give a press release out to newspapers, and television and radio stations.
- Have a good organizer chair the meeting—one who is positive with people—and who understands exactly the purpose and goals of the club.
- A chairman for the club should be elected or appointed.
- Develop a constitution and bylaws.
- Develop membership forms.
- Establish membership dues.
- Appoint a Secretary and Treasurer.
- Launch a membership drive.
- Discuss program plans and events. Stress bicycle riding for all levels of ability.

## CREATE A LOCAL BICYCLE COMMITTEE

The local governing body can appoint a group of citizens to study bicycle matters in the city/town and report to them with recommendations for action. The committee could either be citizens representing a cross-section of bicycling interests and parts of town with an assigned support staff from the town (planning, recreation, engineering) or it could be a mix of bicycling citizens and town staff who work together on bicycle problems.

Topics for the committee to address should be comprehensive in scope including engineering and bicycle facilities, education and safety, enforcement and encouragement. The committee could make specific recommendations in periodic reports.

Some good topics to begin with are:

**Bicycle Ordinances** - Study of existing bicycle ordinances with suggestions for additions and deletions. If no ordinance exists, one could be considered.

**Bicycle Facilities** - Study of existing street network to suggest improvements, if needed.

**Education** - Study of existing bicycle education materials and activities (schools, police department, etc.) with recommendations for improvements.



## DISPLAY BOOTH

Information centers located in public places can be a means of educating individuals on bicycle safety. They may provide information on a program or activity or may just disseminate bicycle safety information. Shopping malls, business areas, fairs, community events, schools and libraries are excellent places to set up displays.

- Check on available facilities. If the booth is to be set up in a mall, for example, check with the management for approval and location for the booth. Also check to see if the facility's policies will allow a show, film, or other demonstration on the premises if such is desired. Make sure facilities can accommodate your needs (e.g., available electric outlets for movie projector).
- Decide upon theme or purpose.
- Determine how many and the type of people needed to man the booth. Determine scheduling of shifts if necessary.
- Determine what materials you will need for booth construction. It could simply be a table(s) and chairs, or it could also require construction which would require such supplies as plywood, nails, 2x4's, etc.
- Determine what materials are needed for distribution and showing (such as handout materials, projectors and screens, posters, banners, etc.).

The following are suggestions which you might consider when planning what the booth should consist of:

- Provide handout materials (e.g., bicycle safety; maintenance; rules of the road; bicycling for fun, transportation, exercise; etc.). Have enough literature available.
- Have a knowledgeable person available to answer questions and tell where to obtain more information.
- Have a safety film (optional). If a film is shown, it must be in an enclosed area (i.e., tent, etc.) unless a daylight screen is available. An open area will attract more people.

- Have a demonstration (optional). An experienced cyclist could ride rollers (stationary riding) to demonstrate cycling techniques. This idea has been used by clubs and has drawn much attention. A bicycle dealer could demonstrate the proper way to select a bike and identify and explain the purpose of safety equipment on the bicycle.

The booth should be attractive with a major focal point illustrating the main purpose of the booth. The use of bright posters, banners or a suspended bicycle will attract attention, with a film or demonstration being a sure drawing card.

## ADULT BICYCLING COURSE

Local area adult education programs or community colleges may be willing to offer an adult cycling course. The course can be designed to provide on-bike and classroom instruction in all aspects of cycling including defensive maneuvers in traffic, long-distance riding, health and physiology, bike maintenance, and route selection.

The course should promote safe and effective cycling. Several outlines are available for organizing such a course (see the "Resources" section).

## BICYCLE RODEO

A bicycle rodeo is an event to test bicycling skills and to inspect and register bicycles. All ages can participate, however, such events are usually enjoyed most by the 8-15 age group.

The skills tests are most effective when oriented to actual traffic situations. They serve to give bicyclists the opportunity to find out how proficient they are in handling their bicycles. The event should also include a review of the rules of the road and determine whether or not the bicyclists are aware of major traffic hazards. With this evaluation and continued practice, the bicyclist can become a better rider and more aware of his/her own performance in traffic situations. These results should, in turn, result in a reduction in bicycle accidents and injuries.



A repair clinic led by local bicycle shops or avid bicyclists is an effective addition to a bicycle rodeo. A skills testing exercise can involve the cooperation of town police as well as civic or recreation groups to aid in monitoring the various tests and actually operating the event. It can be citywide or limited to one neighborhood or area.

An excellent guide to organizing skill tests is available from the North Carolina Bicycle Program (see "Resources" section).

## BICYCLE POSTER CONTEST

A poster contest, if held in conjunction with other bicycle safety programs, can serve to promote safe bicycling among young people. The ways of carrying out such a program can be varied. Some suggestions are provided below.

All grade levels can participate; however, the artistic and conceptual abilities of students will vary among grade levels and should be taken into consideration in developing award categories. Production of the drawings can be integrated into the school schedule by having the drawings made in art, P.E. or driver's education classes.

Posters can depict various subjects pertaining to bicycle safety: rules of the road and safety practices; hazardous locations, parts of the bicycle, maintenance, etc., history of the bicycle; and motorists' precautions.

A bicycle safety theme for the poster content might be chosen with the content material presented to the student at an assembly or in each class. Use of film and distribution of materials are a good start at creativity.

Art teachers or others can judge the posters according to artistic qualities as well as considering their depiction of the subject matter. Area bicyclists or bike shop owners can lend bicycle expertise to the judging. The method of judging (by grade level, subject/category, medium, class, etc.) will need to be determined. Prizes such as bicycles, parts and accessories or trophies may be donated. They should be presented at school assemblies or during class. Following the contest, the posters should be displayed.

## SCHOOL ASSEMBLY

School assemblies provide excellent opportunities to present program material on bicycle safety. With the cooperation of school principals, teachers, students and good bicycle safety speakers, effective programs can be planned.

The times for the assemblies will depend on school schedules and the availability of speakers and other program elements. If assemblies are not regularly part of the school program, a special assembly devoted to bicycle safety might be worked into the schedule.

A school assembly program could include:

- A presentation by a knowledgeable bicycle person or enforcement officer. This person could make a talk, answer questions, or participate in a panel discussion.
  - bicycle dealer
  - police
  - bicycle club member
  - Traffic Safety Information Unit of the Highway Patrol
- Presentations by students with the help of teachers.
  - A showing of safety films, slides, etc. (see "Resources" section).
  - Panel discussion with speaker and students (Jr. and Sr. High level).
  - Distribution of bicycle safety literature.

## BICYCLE ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM

Experience has shown that bicycle law enforcement can greatly augment the effectiveness of bicycle safety education. The two go hand-in-hand, with enforcement providing needed "backbone" to prompt bicyclists to put into practice the safe riding skills they have been taught. Simply educating a youngster on the proper way to ride his bicycle in traffic is not going to have much impact if that youngster decides he "can't be bothered" with giving hand signals or coming to a complete stop at an intersection. Similarly, instruction to



always ride on the right side of the road with traffic may not produce the intended behavior if parents are still teaching their children to ride facing traffic, or if policemen do not know or care enough to positively reinforce the instruction.

Several methods exist for enforcement officers to complement education programs with on-the-road law enforcement or bicycle laws. The simplest may be to periodically stop and talk with violators: however, a program which allows policemen to ticket bicyclists who break the law gives strength and seriousness to the law in the community.



## BICYCLE REGISTRATION CAMPAIGN

If the local area has a bicycle registration program, special emphasis could be placed on getting more of the area bicycles registered. If no registration program exists, the local area could consider initiating one. During other bicycle events or times of heavy bicycle activity, the registering agency could be present or could set up at places of high public exposure (downtown areas, shopping malls, parks, exhibitions, etc.). By setting up a booth in these places, the locality cannot only register bicycles but also distribute bicycle safety materials, motorist awareness information, solicit opinions on bicycle needs, etc.

A big part of the success of a bicycle registration program is public awareness. During and prior to bicycle registration promotions, information about the importance of bicycle registration and the places to register bikes should be widely marketed. Materials could be distributed in the schools for parents to review. Assembly programs at schools could be devoted to bicycle safety and registration. News releases could be distributed to local newspapers, radio and television stations. Letters could be sent to local civic clubs for their awareness (speakers could also appear before civic club meetings).

## HAZARD LOCATION EVENT

This event is undertaken to allow experienced bicyclists to demonstrate what facility problems they encounter when bicycling, and to provide the local government with a definite list/location of these problem areas.

On a given day, following a promotional campaign to get local bicyclists out to express their opinions, local government representatives distribute maps of the area to all bicyclists present. These bicyclists are charged with covering the town and locating and describing potential hazards to bicyclists. Examples of certain hazards are exhibited (i.e., parallel storm sewer grates, traffic signs which cannot be activated by bicycles, potholes, etc.) and guidelines for completing a description of each hazard are explained.

If this event is conducted in one day, the bicyclists may be sent out in groups to cover certain sectors of the town. They would be given a certain time in which to complete their sectors. However, the exercise could be conducted over a period of days to assure a thorough coverage of the town and its bicycle needs.

The event could be made competitive to generate more participation. A judging panel would be created to count each entrant's listings and assure they qualify as potential for consideration. Prizes could be awarded.

Once the information is gathered, the locality should establish a working committee of bicyclists and city staff to compile the data. The hazards should also be ranked by type and priority (and possibly expense to improve). The resulting information gives the locality specific bicycle needs to work with.

## LOCAL BIKE ROUTE

To promote bicycling and to identify good places within and around a locality to bicycle, local governments may develop and publicize a bicycle route or series of routes. *There are a variety of reasons for selecting a specific bicycle route:*

- for aiding bicycle commuters
- for recreational riding
- to highlight historic areas and local points of interest
- to differentiate between high and low volume streets

After determining the primary purposes, a task force of city officials and area bicyclists should work together to select and map the route which best meets their criteria. The route should then be reviewed by a broader audience to determine usability and desirability. Once the selection has been made, the route should be surveyed for necessary street improvements to enhance the safety of bicyclists (i.e., parallel drainage grates, rough pavement, potholes, etc.).

*There are two methods of bicycle route publicizing:*

1. *Mapping* - the route can be mapped and presented in a brochure, together with safety information.
2. *Signing* - the route can be designated with "Bicycle Route" signs.

Exposure from media sources will help assure high use of the information provided.

## BICYCLE SURVEYS

Through the assistance of a civic organization (adult or youth), important bicycle information for a locality can be obtained. Surveys can be conducted to determine attitudes, ridership or opinions on specific bicycle issues. Good, effective questionnaires should be developed using volunteers knowledgeable in statistics and surveying where possible. These questionnaires may be very general or issue specific. If a true random sampling of the community cannot be undertaken, valuable information can still be obtained through telephoning, door-to-door interviews, questioning shoppers at shopping malls, or by leaving questionnaires or contact cards on bicycles

or under windshield wiper blades. Local officials should be aware of the project. The information gathered should be tabulated and provided to the proper officials as well as to the media.

## PROVISION OF BICYCLE PARKING

Bicycle theft results in millions of dollars in losses each year. Safe and secure bicycle parking is a necessity to encourage the use of bicycles. Localities should review and analyze the availability of bicycle parking at, or near, potential bicycle destinations. Various types of bicycle parking facilities should be studied. The old, standard bicycle racks are considered to be inadequate in most instances, and often damaging to bicycles parked in them. The location of bicycle parking facilities is also critical. Out-of-the-way locations are very susceptible to theft.

In addition to localities installing good bicycle parking facilities, they can revise town ordinances to require the installation of bike parking by private developers when new businesses are constructed, new parking lots are built, and new high density residential areas are developed. Some organizations may choose to construct or purchase bicycle racks, lockers and other parking devices and present them to local merchants, schools, and municipal authorities with appropriate publicity. Another approach may be to secure permission to weld rings or metal piping onto existing parking meter stands, buildings or along the sidewalks.



# Making Everyone Aware



*A primary factor in the success of most bicycle events is the involvement of large numbers of people. The following section details the coordination and promotion of a thorough bicycle media campaign. The proper involvement of the media will go a long way to assuring the success of an event.*



## PROMOTING YOUR EVENT

*The success of any bicycle event depends on the interest and support of the community. Members of your community must be aware of the event well beforehand, know how to participate and sense that they have something worthwhile to gain by becoming involved.*

*How you go about creating awareness about your bike event will depend on the event itself, the communications channels available and your own resources. But, the message must go out.*

*Here are some pointers:*



*1. Make one person responsible for coordinating all promotional efforts. This person should be appointed early and should participate in all planning sessions.*

*2. Brainstorm. Discuss all means available for creating public awareness of your event.*

*What is the nature of your local media -- do you have newspapers, radio or TV?*

*What about local recreation and civic organizations? Can you make a presentation or at least an announcement at a regular meeting? Do some of the organizations have related events planned that you could coordinate with? Do the organizations have newsletters that would carry information on your event?*

*What about your local officials? Would they promote your event personally through speeches, special appearances?*

*Where are your high people traffic areas? A mall? A major store? Churches? Schools? Could you put up posters? Could you provide a display or exhibit? Could you hand out brochures or flyers?*

3. Prepare a complete public information plan. Decide which methods you will use to promote your event and schedule them on a calendar. Indicate who is responsible for each task.
4. Check to see what is already available in the way of materials (See the "Resources" section). Obtain additional resource lists of publications, films, and posters from various agencies, including the Bicycle Program, AAA, insurance companies, and bicycle manufacturers.
5. Work closely with your local news media.

If you already have a good working relationship with your local newspaper, radio and TV stations, take advantage of it. If not, this is a good time to establish that relationship. Begin by making a personal phone call. Introduce your organization and your event and ask questions about deadlines, format for submitting information, etc. Remember, they want to know what is happening in their community and you are a part of the community.

Explore the full range of media opportunities. Here are some opportunities you may wish to pursue:

- Newspapers
  - Advance stories on the upcoming event.
  - Feature stories on biking.
  - Coverage of the event, including announcement of winners (photographic opportunity).
- Radio and TV
  - Brief news stories on upcoming event.
  - Public service announcements describing the nature of the event and how local residents can get involved.
  - Public service announcements on bike-related subjects.
  - Talk shows with bike experts/event leaders.
  - Coverage of the event, including announcement of winners (video tape opportunity for TV).

### Remember

Information provided to the news media should be complete (who, what, when, where, how), accurate and neatly prepared. Type all information on one side of paper only, allowing wide margins and double spacing between the lines. Make sure to include the name of the writer and a phone number at top.

If in doubt about how to prepare news releases, feature stories, photos or public service announcements, ask your newspaper or radio or TV station.

Deadlines are critical. Know what they are and meet them.



# Who Can Help ... And How



Many resources exist within every community which can be tapped for assistance in conducting and promoting bicycle events. The following section identifies these various resources and outlines the role which each might play in making local bicycle programs a success.



## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

As you undertake bicycle activities or plan for special bicycle events, various groups and organizations may be able to assist or complement your events with other bicycle activities. The following listing suggests some groups and the types of assistance they may be able to provide:



## PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENTS

- Set up a permanent skills test area—either self-instruction or with aid of P&R staff.
- Conduct registration and inspection programs.
- Conduct proficiency skill tests.
- Hold bike clinic—safety, maintenance, inspection.
- Distribute literature on bike safety.
- Hold used bike flea market.
- Conduct bike rides, bike-ins, bike tours.
- Participate in Bicycle Safety Week.
- Conduct courses in bicycle maintenance and safety.

## BICYCLE DEALERS (listing available from Bicycle Program)

- Promote safe bicycling by discussing safety when selling bicycles.
- Give bicycle safety pamphlet to each bike purchaser.
- Assist with bicycle inspection.
- Register bicycles when sold.
- Participate in speakers bureau.
- Participate in bike rodeos, Bicycle Safety Week.
- Teach repair and maintenance courses.
- Promote the use of helmets.

## CIVIC CLUBS

- Sponsor bicycle rodeos.  
Set up a bicycle safety program.  
The scope of the program could start out small. At first, they could do presentations on bicycle safety, handout literature, etc. The program could then be extended to the community by establishing safety patrols. Further, civic groups could urge support for more bicycle education in schools, stricter enforcement of laws pertaining to bicycle use, and revision of the bicycle ordinance, if needed.
- Set up bicycle safety booths at malls, fairs, etc.
- Donate money to purchase films, books, etc. on bicycle safety, for schools and libraries.
- Conduct a helmet campaign and/or donate helmets to schools for education programs.



Provide man/woman power for the campaign. Purchase the reflecting tape and apply it to bikes at a special event, or at stations around the community.

- Hold bike raffles, perhaps to raise money for a reflectorizing campaign.
- Sponsor bike tours, bike-ins.
- Include bicycle safety tidbits in club newsletter/bulletin.
- Participate in Bicycle Safety Week.
- Hold bike auctions.  
Obtain used bikes, make necessary repairs and donate or sell at low cost to needy families.
- Conduct surveys to identify hazardous areas (e.g., parallel sewer grates).

## 4-H, BOY SCOUTS, GIRL SCOUTS

- Continue 4-H and Scout bicycle safety programs.  
Offer their services to other groups who are trying to put on a large event.  
Participate in Bicycle Safety Week.  
Hold bike-in and camp-outs.
- Participate in group biking.
  - Conduct helmet use program/campaign.
  - Hold poster contest.
  - Include bicycle safety tidbits in club newspaper, bulletin.
  - Participate in bicycle safety game activities.
  - Sponsor a bike-a-thon to promote bicycle safety and raise money.
  - Set up booths in malls, fairs, etc.
  - Register bikes.
  - Conduct community surveys on bicycle use, hazards, problems, etc.
  - Establish and participate in bike patrols to warn bicyclists of improper bicycling activity.
  - Help set up and maintain a record of bicycle accidents and map their location.
  - Submit plans and reports of activities to the Bicycle Committee.

## POLICE

- Register bikes.
- Increase enforcement of bicycle regulations.
- Provide assistance in bicycle parking program.
- Keep bicycle safety literature on hand.
- Participate in speakers bureau.
- Set up file of violations, thefts, bicycle accident statistics.
- Participate in Bicycle Safety Week.



## **BICYCLE CLUBS** (listing available from Bicycle Program)

- Set a good example.
- Assist in bicycle safety program events.
- Sponsor rides and tours.
- Organize bike-a-thon, bike festivals, etc.
- Be a member of speakers bureau.
- Participate in Bicycle Safety Week.
- Distribute safety literature.
- Promote helmet use.

## **SCHOOLS**

- Participate in bike rodeos and permit the use of school grounds for same.
- Set up permanent skills test area on school grounds.
- Hold poster contests.
- Hold school assemblies devoted to bicycle safety—films, speakers (use speakers bureau).
- Display bicycle safety posters.
- Form a bicycle club.
- Participate in Bicycle Safety Week.
- Libraries—Subscribe to bicycle magazines
  - Order books on bicycling and safety
  - Make bicycle safety displays
- Driver Education Classes
  - Devote a segment of the course to bicycle awareness.
  - Distribute handout material on sharing the road with cyclists.



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